



## Blackstone Tree Trimming Measures

### Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

#### *Nottoway County, Virginia*

**Blackstone, VA** - After a 1998 ice storm wreaked havoc on power lines, cables, trees, and cut power to Blackstone residents for hours, town manager Larry Palmore decided it was enough. "Then last year [2002] we had another ice storm and a couple of small twisters. That was enough. There was no question we had to do something to keep from losing power and having downed (power) lines all over the place," Palmore said.



Palmore and his work crew began a tree-trimming campaign in this community of nearly 15,000 residents to reduce the risk of losing power due to downed trees and branches during severe storms, thereby increasing the safety of the people of Blackstone. "We have a nursing home and a medical facility here. We also have a lot of people in this town who for health and other reasons and situations have to have power," Palmore explained.

Palmore said people started fussing when we started cutting back (trees). But months later when they found out the hurricane was coming, "They were more than happy to have us out there." When Hurricane Isabel hit, Blackstone lost power at about 2:30 p.m. September 18th, and the town's lines were operational and ready to power by 5:30 p.m. the same day. "We lost our source, so we didn't totally restore power until [the next day], but we were ready," he said.

"We definitely helped residents save their properties from falling trees and limbs, and we definitely saved a lot (of money) not having to replace downed lines and poles," Palmore said. "Everywhere around us was torn up." The efforts to clear branches from power lines paid off.

Although Palmore had no dollar figures, he estimated the cost of the pre-hurricane "pruning" was about 10 percent of what the cost of rebuilding new power lines would have been. A preparedness proposal to expand the power transmission line right-of-way to further protect it from storm and tree damage is under consideration.

#### Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **Virginia**

County: **Nottoway County**

### Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**  
Hazard Type: **Hurricane/Tropical Storm**  
Activity/Project Type: **Utility Protective Measures**  
Activity/Project Start Date: **04/2003**  
Activity/Project End Date: **09/2003**  
Funding Source: **Local Sources; Private funds**  
Funding Recipient: **Local Government**  
Funding Recipient Name: **Blackstone residents**

### Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**

### Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal  
Disaster? **No**  
Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**  
Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**  
Year First Tested: **2003**  
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

### Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: **<http://www.fema.gov/>**  
Reference URL 2: **<http://www.virginia.gov/>**

### Main Points

- Avoided power loss
- Saved money
- Pro-active rather than re-active
- Community and volunteer spirit